

# Cohesive Devices in Student's Writing (A Discourse Analysis on Argumentative Text)

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**Abstract:** This research aims to analyse a piece of argumentative writing produced by fifth semester of Darussunnah students in a term of cohesion issues of discourse analysis. The cohesive devices are viewed as a structure of analysis to investigate the grammatical and lexical cohesion in writing. Qualitative and quantitative (mixed method) were applied in analysing the data. The quantitative analysis investigates the frequency and percentage of errors committed in student's writing. Qualitative analysis were employed to investigate linguistic description and the explanation of the cohesion produced by student's writing. The result showed that students have performed the cohesive devices. However, students need to improve the use of cohesive device, especially in grammatical cohesion to result higher level of cohesion.

**Key words:** argumentative writing; cohesive devices; grammatical and lexical cohesion

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis karya tulis argumentatif mahasiswa semester V Darussunnah dalam kerangka analisis permasalahan kohesi. Perangkat kohesif dipandang sebagai struktur analisis untuk menyelidiki kohesi gramatikal dan leksikal dalam menulis. Analisis data dilakukan secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif (metode campuran). Analisis kuantitatif menyelidiki frekuensi dan persentase kesalahan yang dilakukan dalam menulis siswa. Analisis kualitatif digunakan untuk menyelidiki deskripsi linguistik dan penjelasan tentang kohesi yang dihasilkan oleh tulisan siswa. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa telah menggunakan perangkat kohesif. Namun, siswa perlu meningkatkan penggunaan perangkat kohesif, terutama dalam kohesi gramatikal untuk menghasilkan tingkat kohesi yang lebih tinggi.

**Kata kunci:** penulisan argumentatif; perangkat kohesif; kohesi gramatikal dan leksikal

English remains its position in Indonesia as the only foreign language which is officially taught in every class (Lauder, 2010; Marzuki, 2016; Marzuki, 2017). Since it is a compulsory subject in every level of education in the Indonesian context, various approaches, methods, materials, and strategies are employed for administering the ELT in Indonesia (Marzuki, 2019a). Through these teaching strategies, the teaching English is expected to meet its goal which is to attain communicative competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, consisting grammatical competence, and strategic competence. The acquirement of communicative competence indicates by four language skills aforementioned, writing is not easy to conduct, many aspects should be undertaken.

One might be an issue in producing a good writing is the matter of cohesion. The aspect of cohesion is able to provide the writing to be more communicative and effective which enables the readers more easy to get the point accurately. The demonstration of creating coherent is just as cohesive discourse so as to guarantee surface or cohesion in producing text. The impact of discourse devices on writing is likewise exceptionally firm since they give the learners different sorts of syntactic devices which are utilized to extend any bit of discourse to be cohesive (Martin, 2001; Ebrahimpourtaher and Eissaei, 2013; Halliday and Hassan, 2014; Nugraheni, 2016; Hasani, 2016; Saud, 2018). It is significant that without having a decent direction of the linguistic ties, one can never develop a cohesive discourse. They perceive

cohesion as the only factor that distinguishes texts from non-texts. The mastery of cohesive devices is a necessary element for effective academic writing and also essential for academic success in any courses where English is the medium of instruction.

Various works and studies have been conducted regarding to this issue. Suningsih (2016) has conducted the study of the use of cohesive devices in students' writing in Lampung. There were three groups of students' writing to be analysed, they are Pre-intermediate, advance, and academic writing course. From this study, it revealed that the use of the substitution in three groups of students are quite balance. In ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, the higher proficiency of students, the less ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion emerged. Bahaziq (2016) through his research of cohesive devices in written discourse of a student's essay writing revealed that the student's writing shows explicit evidence of cohesion and indicates the use of grammatical and lexical devices. This research was conducted only on single writing which produced by a college student in Saudi Arabia setting.

The next research comes from Saudi Arabia as well. Almutairi (2017) investigated a discourse analysis of cohesive devices in Saudi student's writing. This research has similarity to the previous study which only focus on a single student's writing. From his study, it revealed that some cohesive devices have been used in inappropriate way. This result affected students' writing essay quality and led to the problematic and negative quality of essay writing. The last research emerges from Iran which is conducted by Parazaran and Motahari (2015). He attempted to investigate grammatical cohesive device which focused on shifts of cohesion in translating narrative text type. The researcher employed mixed method (comparative and descriptive model) to analyse the data of the research. Thirty nine different stories were taken to be analysed. The result of this research showed that there was a different of grammatical devices used between TT (text type) and ST (style text).

Due to the results from previous studies above, it seems that students faced difficulties in presenting the cohesive devices in an appropriate way. However, it is reasonable considering that the students are foreign language learners. In this case, studying and investigating the cohesive devices in college students' writing will lead to the result which will determine the capacity of student's ability in presenting the cohesive devices. Every study will probably carry different findings due to the variety of research subject, setting, and objective.

Hence, it is necessary to investigate the cohesive devices in student's writing to determine the lack and what need to be evaluated and improved regarding to students' writing. Through this research, hopefully it will enable students to write properly to achieve the goal of language learning.

Overall, based on the elaboration above, it seems that cohesion is one of the influential aspects to determine the quality of writing. The cohesive device emerges significantly since it carries the aspect of grammatical devices and lexical devices which will effectively strengthen the writing to be more precise and contextually meaningful. Moreover, grammar knowledge and any aspect of linguistic won't be properly and correctly presented without the discourse analysis attempts. Hence, through the elaboration of this issue above, research questions might arise are, what cohesive devices are used by college students of Darussunnah in their argumentative writing?, and how are the correctness of cohesive devices performed by college students of Darussunnah through their argumentative writing?

## **METHOD**

This study aimed at identifying and analyzing student's argumentative writing through the analysis of cohesive devices promoted by Halliday and Hasan (2014). In this study, qualitative performance analysis and quantitative analysis were employed (mixed method). Qualitative performance analysis played in describing the cohesive devices used by the student. In other way, quantitative analysis was useful to calculate the emergence of cohesive devices in the form of numbers and numerical tables.

The subjects of this research were college students from the fifth semester of Darussunnah University. They partook the English course which focuses on the writing skill building in academic year 2019/2020. The focus of writing tends to write an argumentative writing. The student comes from non-English background. The major of their study is Hadith sciences. Therefore, through the choosing of this subject, it may carry different result from other conducted researches.

In collecting the data, a single student's writing was analyzed. Firstly, students were demanded in the beginning of the course that the final product of the course was to produce an argumentative writing. Therefore, document collection was a single data collecting technique employed in this research.

Through this technique, the writing was analyzed through cohesive devices analysis.

In this case, it depicted the general review of information, creating codes and categories, making preliminary counts of data and determines how frequently codes appear in the database. Hence, the descriptive analysis was conducted through several steps; collecting student's writing, counting the cohesive devices, categorizing the cohesive devices, and discussing the finding.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Grammatical cohesive

#### Reference

The finding indicates that the student used various types of reference. The used of reference can be seen in the Table 1. The table shows there are four reference types used in her argumentative writing. The data revealed that the use of definite article (the) is highest reference used by 61.03%, then followed by demonstrative pronoun (this, and that) with 19.4%. The other references are personal reference (we, he, it) 10.38% and comparative reference (as well as, other, otherwise, like, so) indicated by 9.09%. The used of reference seems dominance in grammatical cohesive device, in total (see Table 3) reference used is seventy-seven times by 69.36%.

### Conjunction

The next component of grammatical cohesive is conjunction. There are three types of conjunction used by students. The detail result is presented in Table 2. (see Table 2). The table presents that the use of additive conjunction (and, also, or) 76.6%, then followed by adversative conjunction (however) by 13.3%, and the last conjunction appears in her essay is causal conjunction (so, because) 10%. As seen in table 3 (see Table 3) that overall, the used of conjunction is thirty times by 27%.

### Ellipsis and Substitution

The last grammatical cohesive device is ellipsis and substitution. The data revealed that only ellipsis used by students by four times. Comparing to the grammatical cohesive in general, it resulted 3.6%. However, substitution did not appear in the writing.

### Lexical cohesive

The data revealed (see Table 3) that the used of lexical cohesive divided into five categories. Repetition has the highest frequency by 89.4%, and then followed by synonym 5.3%, collocations 2.64%, antonym 1.5%, and the last is superordinate by 1.05%. The analysis reveals that the grammatical cohesive is dominated by the used of 69.36% reference (see Table 3). In this case, the reference is dominated by the article used

Table 1. The Use of Reference

Type of Reference	Number of Reference					Total Use of Reference
Personal Reference	Reference	Reference Line	Number of Devices	Total		77
Demonstrative reference	We	2/10/25	3	8	10.38	
	He	3	1		%	
	It	13/19/26/47	4			
	This	9/12/18/39	4	15	19.4	
	That	1/2/4/12/18/20/ 21/26/30/35/47	11		%%	
Comparative Reference	As well as	17/34	2	7	9.09	
	Other	3/5	2		%	
	Otherwise	33	1			
	Like	2	1			
	So	49	1			
Definite Article	The	2/6/8/9/10/12/13/14/15/16/2 3/24/25/26/27/31/33/34/35/3 6/37/38/40/41/42/23/ 44/47/49/51	47	47	61.03	%

**Table 2. The Use of Conjunction**

Type of conjunction	Number of Conjunction				Total Use of conjunction
	Conjunction	Conjunction Line	Number of Devices	Total	
Additive conjunction	And	5/6/15/16/17/23/30/34/35/38/41/42/43/45/49/51	18	23	76.6%
	Also	19	1		
	Or	3/23/33	4		
Adversative conjunction	However	1/9/20/48	4	4	13.3%
Causal conjunction	so	49	1	3	10%
	Because	27/35	2		

**Table 3. Grammatical Cohesive Device**

Total	Grammatical Cohesive Device	Total Use	
		No	Percentage (%)
111	Reference	77	69.36%
	Conjunction	30	27%
	Ellipsis	4	3.6%
	Substitution	-	0%

**Table 4. Lexical Cohesive Device**

No	Lexical Cohesive devices	Number	Percentage
1	Repetition	169	89.4%
2	Synonymy	10	5.3%
3	Antonymy	3	1.5%
4	Superordinate	2	1.05%
5	Collocations	5	2.64%
	<b>Total</b>	189	100%

(see appendix B). It might be indicated that the writer has no sufficient knowledge of definite article used. It is reasonable considering that the concept of definite article does not exist in *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Relating to lexical cohesion, it reveals that students used it 189 times. In this case, the use of repetition dominates the lexical cohesive device by 89.4%. The great distinction of this finding might indicates that student attempted to specify the topic of the discussion. It is proved by the highest repetition is on the word "legal" 21 times and "law" 21 times as well.

The other aspect such as synonym, antonym, superordinate, and collocations are used no more than ten times.

## CONCLUSION

The proper use of cohesive devices is able to facilitate writer to write a text with good cohesion. Hence, if a text makes sense to the reader, it means that the writer has performed the cohesive device properly.

The result of this research shows that students have performed the cohesive devices. However, students need to improve the use of cohesive device, especially in grammatical cohesion to reach higher level of cohesion.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers would like to express their greatest gratitude and honor to the students who have been involved in this study and the lecturers who have allowed their classes to be used for data collection.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Students' writing**

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LAW AWARENESS**

(1) Indonesia is a country that has a good formal legal system. However, in reality, we will find the fact that there are a lot of law violations occur. like a rider driving recklessly, or he do not use helmets or do not carry a driver's license. Other than that, fights between youth, between students, between villages, murder, theft, drug traffickers and dealers, and other criminal acts such as kidnapping children and organs (human trafficking) which lately disturbs the community.

(7) Even more sad things, law enforcement actors who should be a good example for the community actually commit violations of law (Read: Corruption Case). This obsolete phenomenon seems to be a normal thing. However, should the deviant behavior of the law remain accustomed to being understood? Are we not supposed to accustom things to not be accustomed to?

(12) This reality increasingly shows how opaque the existence of the State of Indonesia as state law. If discussed further, it can be seen that the loss of legal compliance is due to the lack of legal awareness. As social control, the law is born to control the community not to commit crimes and potential within them, both in the perspective of social actors individually and cooperatively together in social unity. Many legal products have regulated social and individual behavior in daily life as well as in government areas. This has also been known by most modern humans. However, if only knowledge without awareness, it is certain that legal compliance is only wishful thinking.

(22) Legal awareness is a conscious attitude that arises from within man about what the law is or what the law should be, something that arises from within the heart through inspiration and an attitude of what should be done and what should not be done. One indicator of the level of legal awareness in the community is knowledge of the law. If we look at the current conditions, legal awareness is considered very concerning because it is still on the theoretical level rather than practice. supposedly, every knowledge that is known must be practiced in every social dynamic.

(30) Legal awareness is certainly an important thing and must be improved. The increase is by learning knowledge about law in general. Both against written regulations or rules that are not codified. In law enforcement by law enforcement institutions must be maximized. otherwise, the importance of providing knowledge about law and cultural values as moral formation, as well as improving the quality of education both at the level of formal and non-formal institutions. Because legal awareness must be encouraged with the ability to understand the law. The essence is the ability to provide an understanding of the law can develop attitudes that are substantially aware of the law. The output can distinguish which can be done and which cannot be done.

(40) This is why the progress of a nation can be seen from the level of legal awareness and the level of community compliance with the law itself. If the level of legal awareness of the population of a country increases, community and state life will be more orderly, which in itself justice and public welfare will be realized. Conversely, if the legal awareness of the people of a country is low, then the impact is the existence of the law of the jungle, injustice, arbitrariness and even increasing poverty. Legal awareness in each individual is an important factor in legal compliance, while legal compliance is the essence of legal progress.

(48) Legal awareness is not a trivial matter just to be known. However, it must be absorbed in the heart and applied through self-awareness so that legal compliance will be realized. Legal civilization must be carried out from an early age and starts from the household as the smallest miniature state of law, to achieve a society of legal culture.